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Records Show Wilson Millions on C.I.A.

The following article is based on reporting by John
and was written by Mr. Gerth.

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Previous articles have reported on Mr. Wilson's recruitment of pilots and mechanics from the United States and Britain to fly and maintain planes for the Libyan Air Force, his attempt to sell restricted American computer technology to the Soviet Union, his use of Army Special Forces troops to train terrorists in Libya, evidence that investigators say links him to the attempted murder of a Libyan student in Colorado and charges that a company he controlled bribed a Federal official. The House Select Committee on Intelligence and the Justice Department are investigating the matter.

WASHINGTON, Nov. 7 — Edwin P. Wilson used the techniques and contacts he developed as an intelligence agent to assemble a multimillion-dollar business empire, according to former associates and financial records.

An American agent for more than 20 years, Mr. Wilson is now living in Tripoli, a fugitive from an indictment charging him with illegal dealings in explosives. He works for the Government of Libya, training terrorists and recruiting Western pilots and mechanics, according to United States officials.

He has made a profession of covert operations. From 1955 to 1976 he worked for the Central Intelligence Agency and Office of Naval Intelligence, often with distinction, and became skillful at conducting clandestine commercial ventures for those agencies.

For the last five years he has continued to practice, as a civilian, the business of intelligence and covert operations, often for unfriendly governments and usually at large personal profit.

Records show that Mr. Wilson's financial assets increased enormously while he was still in the Government and that they now total many millions of dollars.

Many Government employees, from generals to lawyers, leave public service every year and turn their experiences into private profit. But Mr. Wilson's case is special. He is working for countries hostile to the United States, employing his training as a spy, investigations have shown.

For Government officials, his career illustrates a growing problem: Many intelligence and military employees leave the Government and enter civilian life with skills that are not marketable or are illegal in the United States but are in demand abroad. There is, the officials say, the temptation for these agents and servicemen to put their experience to work for foreign powers in a way that is not in the best interest of the United States.

Stansfield Turner, Director of Central Intelligence in the Carter Administration, noted the problem in a recent article. "The ethic of intelligence," Mr. Turner wrote, "is to get the job done in spite of local laws."

At the Central Intelligence Agency, Stanley Sporkin, the general counsel, has said that he is exploring possible measures to control the actions of individuals who leave the agency. Mr. Sporkin refuses to comment on the specific activities of Mr. Wilson.

Repeated telephone calls to Mr. Wilson in Libya have gone unanswered.

The date of Mr. Wilson's re-entry into private life is recorded in Government personnel files as April 1978. But an examination of Mr. Wilson's career, from corporate records in several countries and interviews with dozens of current and former associates, shows that his transition from public to private life was blurred.

Continuing Government Links

Specifically, the examination shows these things:

¶As a Government agent, Mr. Wilson participated in operations that involved arms smuggling and the intimidation of adversaries. He also learned to set up dummy corporations and secret bank accounts.

¶For at least two years after he left the Government, Mr. Wilson used some of the same consulting companies for private deals that earlier served as cover for his intelligence operations.

¶As a private businessman, Mr. Wilson maintained business relationships with key American and foreign intelligence and military officials he had worked with while in the C.I.A.

¶In the last five years Mr. Wilson has used unwitting organizations for his personal benefit, just as he once used them for intelligence purposes.

¶Drawing on his C.I.A. experience, Mr. Wilson created a clandestine international network of dozens of corporations, agents, hideouts, post office boxes and secret bank accounts in the United States, Great Britain, Belgium, Switzerland, Malta and Libya.

The blurring of Mr. Wilson's public and private activities is of immediate concern to Federal prosecutors. They have already charged Mr. Wilson with conspiring with former C.I.A. associ-

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A review of his career shows that he participated in covert operations and business activities simultaneously. According to a résumé he prepared for himself and intelligence officials, Mr. Wilson, while in the C.I.A., ran several companies that served as cover for official intelligence operations.

Millionaire as U.S. Aide

At the same time he was running businesses designed as cover for intelligence activities, Mr. Wilson managed to become a wealthy man. According to credit records, he listed his net worth at \$200,000 in 1967 and \$2 million in April 1978, the month he left Government service. It is not clear precisely how he made so much money, but Government officials surmise that he benefited from the commercial activities he ran for the intelligence agencies. Intelligence officials say that nowadays its audits would prevent such abuses.

Today, Mr. Wilson's real estate holdings in northern Virginia alone are worth more than \$5 million, and his net worth, including land in Europe, Swiss bank accounts and corporate stock amounts to many millions more.

Early in Mr. Wilson's career as a covert operative, he became an officer in the Seafarers International Union. He described the union in his résumé as an "unwitting U.S. labor organization in maritime field."

In his capacity as a union official, Mr. Wilson helped coordinate various C.I.A. activities against Cuba, including the Bay of Pigs invasion. He supplied foreign agents with arms and took part in operations designed to harass Fidel Castro, the Cuban leader. Union officials said through a spokesman that they would have no comment.

In 1978, after leaving the Government